

**Chairman Johnson Opening Statement**  
**“Assessing the Security of Critical Infrastructure: Threats, Vulnerabilities, and Solutions”**

**Wednesday, May 18, 2016**

*As submitted for the record:*

Good morning and welcome. Today’s hearing seeks to identify key threats to critical infrastructure, available mitigation plans, and opportunities for the federal government to better assist stakeholders as they work to protect America’s infrastructure.

Our nation’s critical infrastructure sectors are not only lifelines in the integrated system, they are also crucial to our country’s economic stability and national security. For these reasons, the safeguarding of critical infrastructure is a priority of this Committee.

During the past few years, the United States and countries around the world have experienced numerous attacks against vital infrastructure sectors. In April 2013, criminals shot at the Metcalf power substation outside of San Jose, California, putting 17 transformers out of service for 27 days and causing over \$15 million in damage. This experience demonstrates that America’s critical infrastructure is susceptible to criminal acts.

Additionally, since 2014, there have been more than a dozen instances of intentional cuts of fiber optic cables causing telephone and computer network disruptions in Northern California and several states on the east coast. These incidents represent a significant threat to the integrity of the system and to the efforts of first responders.

Although many of the previous attacks have been physical in nature, cyber-criminals are also employing highly-sophisticated tactics to infiltrate and manipulate control systems. In December 2015, a cyber-attack on the control system of a Ukrainian electric grid left over 230,000 consumers without power, in some cases for over six hours. The attack did not result in any physical damage to the grid, though it demonstrates how hackers could corrupt software-related assets.

In addition to man-made threats, there are natural hazards—earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, and floods—that threaten critical infrastructure every day. According to experts, a major solar weather event causing widespread power outages is inevitable.

Protecting America’s core infrastructure requires commitment and actions by all stakeholders. The government and the private sector play key roles, but neither can ensure critical infrastructure protection alone. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the federal agency charged with working with state and local governments and private sector stakeholders to ensure all sectors have adequate information and protection. As we learn from the witnesses today, it is my hope that we will identify key areas in which DHS can better assist stakeholders in their work.

I want to thank our witnesses for joining us and I look forward to your testimony.